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JOINT PASTORAL LETTER

Of the Archbishop, Bishops and Abbot-Ordinary of the Ecclesiastical Province of Regina

JAMES CHARLES by the grace of God and favour of the Apostolic See
Archbishop of Regina.

JOSEPH HENRY by the grace of God and favour of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

LOUIS JOSEPH ARTHUR by the grace of God and favour of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Gravelbourg.

SEVERIN, O.S.B., by the grace of God and favour of the Apostolic See
Abbot-Ordinary of St. Peter's, Muenster.

To The Reverend Clergy, Diocesan and Religious, to The Religious Communities of Women and To The Faithful of the Ecclesiastical Province of Regina.

GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION IN THE LORD

Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus:

Pastoral solicitude for the flock of Christ entrusted to Our care by the grace of God and the authority of the Holy See has prompted Us, the Shepherds of the four jurisdictions of the Ecclesiastical Province of Regina, to take common counsel and follow a uniform and united plan of action in a concerted and determined effort to solve the problems confronting our dioceses in these most difficult times. The general sorrow and anxiety which is our lot during these dark hours of the social and economic crisis moves us, therefore, to address to you this message of supernatural affection and prayerful encouragement and to point out to you the necessity of complete cooperation with your bishops in keeping intact the deposit of the Faith and in safeguarding the spiritual and temporal well-being of our parishes and religious institutions.

You are not without knowing, dearly beloved, that the heavy hand of depression has fallen not only upon our farmers, professional men and indeed all wage earners but also upon our parish churches, hospitals, convents, colleges and religious communities. Our dioceses in particular are encumbered by serious financial obligations incurred during the years of prosperity and development. In point of fact, so heavy is the burden that only the closest possible cooperation between clergy and people under the direction of their Ordinaries, coupled with the spirit of economy, poverty and self-sacrifice can bring our present difficulties to a happy solution.

You are already aware, dearly beloved, that your Chief Pastors and the clergy in general are, like yourselves, living in poverty. The necessity of the present hour brings us back to the ideal left us by Christ and practised by His Apostles in every age according to the words of St. Paul "But having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we

are content" (1 Tim. VI.8). The great source of anxiety for Us is the question of debts incurred to build our churches and rectories and to further the spread of the Faith in our respective jurisdictions. It is true that in this we share the common lot of most of our faithful people who on account of the low price of wheat and other farm products find it exceedingly difficult to honour contracts made in more prosperous days. Add to this the terrible drought that has for three, and in some districts four years, completely paralyzed the great southern plains of the Archdiocese of Regina and the diocese of Gravelbourg, and the conclusion is easy to draw. In point of fact the general economic condition is so serious that our provincial government has been obliged to take steps hitherto unknown in our provincial history to protect debtors.

In as far as our Church debts are concerned We have a tradition of honour to uphold. We, therefore, feel much more keenly than private individuals or secular corporations the burden that is Ours. Yet, so acute is the economic crisis at the present hour that, while it is our set purpose and determination to ultimately meet all our obligations, We may be forced to ask our creditors to make certain concessions, at least for a time.

Our priests, religious communities and people must however all realize that they should, despite adverse circumstances, make supreme efforts and give unstinted cooperation to their bishops in the present crisis. The spirit of poverty must characterize—as indeed it does—our priests and religious. The most rigid economy must be adopted in the administration of parishes. No further borrowing can be tolerated in any of our dioceses and every legitimate means must be taken to reduce expenses of every kind to the strict minimum. In other words we must balance our budgets. Our priests must be generous in their sacrifices and our dear faithful people, poor as they are, must, like our forefathers in the Faith, give out of their poverty, to ensure the existence of the Church in their midst. Such generosity and self-sacrifice will serve to bind bishops, priests and faithful more closely together and may be the way of Divine Providence to secure that union of hearts and sentiments which will mould the cosmopolitan units of our Catholic population of Saskatchewan into a strong and vigorous Church.

We, Your Shepherds and Fathers in Christ, sympathize from the depths of Our hearts with you in your present poverty and sorrow. In truth Our hearts bleed for you and in order to lighten the burden of debts that press so heavily upon our parishes, We have not hesitated to become beggars for Christ in His mystical body. We are most anxious to continue to help you by living on the strict necessities of life and by continuing to beg alms in your behalf. This should encourage you to unite in the spirit of Christian charity and sacrifice with your priests to do all you can to meet your parish debts. Let every pastor feel that he is, by Canon Law, responsible for the temporals of his parish. Let the people unite with him in a noble determination to meet their parish obligations. It is evident that pastor and people fail in their plain duty when they leave the burden of paying interest and capital to their bishops, who in this country, have absolutely no resources except those that, by the law of the Church, come from the

parishes themselves. We realize that, at the present time, it is most difficult and, in some cases, impossible to fully meet your obligations, but you are bound in conscience to take the matter seriously and make special efforts. Then, when you have done all that lies in your power, We will continue, as We have done in the past, to become beggars for Christ in His mystical body, to ensure the consolations of the Church for yourselves and for your children. We cannot fail to pay a tribute of praise and admiration to so many priests who have, in spite of their dire poverty, heroically stood by their people in the present crisis and by their example of self-sacrifice, gained the undying affection of their flocks. At the same time, We thank, with cordial affection, Our faithful people in every part of this Province, who have given so generously during these lean years to the cause of religion. This is the only Catholic attitude worthy of our forefathers in the Faith and of the first missionaries who planted the Faith and watered its first growth with their tears midst poverty, hardship and self-abnegation of every kind.

All God's works are founded on sacrifice and prayer. The spirit of Christ is one of self-denial and mortification. It inspires courage to walk in the royal road of the Cross and to respond with generosity to this appeal of the Master, "If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. XVI. 24). We, Chief Pastors, priests, and people must now show by our own example that we do not aspire to a Christianity without penance, a forgiveness without atonement, or a heaven without Calvary. Let us show ourselves to be true disciples of the Divine Victim of the Cross. Remember that the Gospel is inseparable from the Cross and that the "Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence" (Matt. XI. 12); and consequently let us accept with cheerful hearts the law of penance which for sinful man is a law of resurrection and of life (Acts XI. 18).

To sacrifice we must join the spirit of prayer and loving confidence in Divine Providence. "In Thee, O Lord have I hoped. Thou wilt hear me, O Lord, my God" (Ps. XXXVII. 16). "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains from whence help shall come to me" (Ps. CXX. 1). Let us turn to God with all our hearts in humble, confident, persevering prayer. To pray is to associate God to one's own life, to clothe oneself with His omnipotence, to put on His armour according to the expressive words of the Apostle (Eph. VI. 2). In your tribulation, call upon the Lord (1. Kings XXII. 7); cry to Him and He will hear you because He is full of compassion (Exodus XXII. 27). Let us show special devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar where the Sacred Heart of Our Saviour remains day and night awaiting, calling and welcoming those who come to visit Him in the mystery of His love. Let us increase attendance at daily Mass and multiply the number of daily communicants. Celebrate with great devotion in the spirit of repentance and pious reparation the feast of the Sacred Heart and its octave according to the pressing invitation of our Holy Father. (Encyclicals *Miserentissimus Redemptor* and *Caritate Christi Compulsi*). Let us, too, practice without ceasing a loving devotion to Our Blessed Lady, the Queen of the Holy Rosary, the glorious patroness of this Ecclesiastical Province of Regina.

The loving protection of Mary over our diocese under the title of

the Queen of the Holy Rosary gives us supreme confidence and unfailing hope that, through her most powerful intercession with her Divine Son, God will bless our common efforts, save our dioceses and religious institutions and solve our pressing problems. It was with this most firm faith and serene abiding confidence that We, your Fathers in Christ, after a day of serious deliberation for your spiritual and temporal welfare, have, on the evening of April 5th, consecrated together Our dioceses and Abbey to Mary, God's holy mother. In the chapel of the Regina Cleri Seminary, We have, after reciting the rosary and litany of Our Blessed Lady, placed Our beloved flocks and Our common concerns, spiritual, temporal and social under her maternal protection. More than that; there, on bended knees, We have made a solemn vow to propagate without ceasing the devotion of the Most Holy Rosary, throughout Our jurisdictions; to keep, with special solemnity the annual feast of Our Lady of the Rosary; and to establish her confraternity in every parish and mission under Our charge. We know that your faith and piety will prompt you to help your Chief Pastors carry out this solemn pledge and We ask you even now and particularly during the month of May to fulfill the promise We have made in your name as in Our own.

With the utmost confidence in your cooperation, made meritorious by supernatural motives, We lovingly invoke upon you the blessing of Almighty God and again consecrate you, Our most dear children, to Mary, our Queen and Mother. "The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor.XIII. 13).

Given at Regina, on the Feast of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, the seventh day of April, nineteen hundred and thirty-three, and appointed to be read in all the churches of the Ecclesiastical Province of Regina (Regina, Prince Albert and Saskatoon, Gravelbourg and Muenster) and the chapels of Religious Communities on April 30th, the second Sunday after Easter of the same year.

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Bishop of Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

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By order of the Ordinaries of the
Ecclesiastical Province of Regina.

J. E. CAHILL,

Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Regina.